

ABSTRACT

The Government of Kenya has initiated a number of education fundings namely Free Day Secondary Education Fund, Constituency Development Fund and District Education Board Bursary in secondary schools in an attempt to promote retention and reduce dropout rate among students in public secondary schools. However, according to the Ministry of Education report of 2013, the national dropout rate of students in secondary schools in Kenya was 42,272 (7.8 percent) and retention rate was 419,608 (76.7 percent). In Seme Sub-County, the proportion of persons of secondary school going age (14 – 19 years) without access to secondary education was 2,257 (9.1 percent). Further, of those attending secondary schools, 5,883 (26.1 percent) dropped out before completion. The purpose of this study therefore was to assess the influence of education fundings on retention and dropout of students in public secondary schools in Seme Sub-County. The objectives of the study were to; examine levels of education fundings, to determine retention and drop-out rate of students and to establish the relationship between government education fundings and students retention and drop-out rate in secondary schools. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study population included 33 Principals, 1 District Education Officer (DEO), 1 Constituency Development Fund (CDF) secretary and 1 District Education Bursary Board (DEBB) secretary. Two types of research instruments: questionnaire and interview schedule were used for data collection. A pilot study was conducted in 3 schools to establish both reliability and validity of the instruments. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Pearson Correlation analysis) were used to analyze the quantitative data, while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The study found that all the public secondary schools in Seme Sub County, received the education fundings. The study also found that there was high retention rate and low dropout rate among students due to the availability of various government educational funding. Pearson moment correlation showed a strong positive correlation between public education fundings and students retention rate ($r=0.845$; $p = .040$) and a strong negative relationship between public education fundings and dropout rate among the students ($r = -0.618$; $p = .011$). The study recommends that the amount allocated for the various government education funds should be increased so that more students can benefit. This study is significant as it highlights the level of impact of existing public education fundings by the needy students. It also outlines the significance of the funding on education thus it provides framework for policy makers to set up and disseminate the funds in appropriate ways to increase its impact.